

Background

The FCC has technical quality standards that define a basic quality of service which cable subscribers are entitled to receive. Cable companies serving 1,000 or more subscribers must test semi-annually to demonstrate that they meet those standards.

What Should I Do if I Am Not Receiving a Good Quality Picture?

First check to make sure all the equipment and wiring you own that is connected to the cable wiring works properly, including your TVs, VCRs and converters.

If My Problem Appears to Be With My Cable Signal, Who Do I Contact to File a Complaint?

Signal quality complaints should be referred directly to your cable company. The FCC's rules require cable companies to have a process in place to resolve subscriber complaints on signal quality. At least once a year, companies must also notify subscribers of their complaint resolution process.

What Should I Do If My Cable Company Does Not Resolve My Complaint?

Contact your local franchising authority (LFA), which is the local city, county or other government organization that regulates your cable television service. The name of the local franchising authority may be on the front or back of your cable bill. If this information is not on your bill, contact your cable company or your local town or city hall.

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The FCC's technical rules are generally enforced by the LFA, which is the most likely to be familiar with a local system's operation and plant. The rules also assist the LFA in judging the cable company's technical performance during the franchise renewal process. This process determines whether a cable company can continue to provide cable service to the community.

Can My Cable Company Temporarily Interrupt My Service to Conduct Technical Tests Required by the FCC?

Some of the tests cable companies must perform to verify they are within the FCC's standards may require them to temporarily interrupt the service on certain channels. These interruptions are generally during off-peak viewing hours and should last no longer than a few minutes.

Does the FCC Require Cable Companies to Deliver a Signal That Allows Me To Use My Closed-Captioned Equipment?

The FCC requires cable companies to deliver closed-captioning data, intact. This allows hearing-impaired subscribers who have closed-captioning decoders to receive written information on the audio portion of the programming.

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How Can I Find out if My Cable Company Is in Compliance with the FCC's Subscriber Signal Quality Standards?

The FCC's rules require that your cable company keep its signal quality standards in a public file at its place of business.

Where to Go For Additional Information and Assistance

For further information about Subscriber Signal Quality Standards, please visit the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at www.fcc.gov/cgb.

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For this or any other consumer publication in an alternative format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print, or audio), please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an e-mail to FCC504@fcc.gov.

To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, click on <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts>.

This fact sheet is for consumer education purposes only and is not intended to affect any proceeding or cases involving this subject matter or related issues.

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